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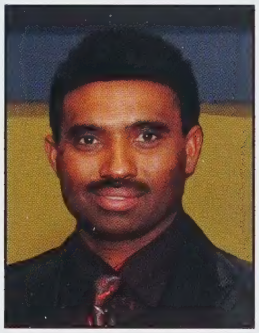

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Brampton Tamil Association

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Message from the President, Brampton Tamil Association

On behalf of Brampton Tamil Association, it gives me immense pleasure in welcoming all of you to the Eelam Pavilion. You will learn about our rich culture, language which is recognized as a classical language, enjoy the performances which consists various forms of dances, taste their spicy and unique food in many varieties.

People in Eelam speak the language called Tamil. Tamil is spoken by over 80 million people all over the world. 60 million live in Tamil Nadu in India, 3 million live in Eelam (North and East provinces of Sri Lanka), one million live in Malaysia and over 300,000 live in Canada. Tamils live large over 15 countries.

Tamil language is amongst the oldest living languages of the world with its extra-ordinary volume of literature and grammar. It has been the means through which people have vividly expressed their understanding, aspirations and ideals. Its oldest work Tolkaappiyam dates back to about 200 years BC.

The annual multicultural festival in the name of "Carabram" with twelve participant cultures reflects these entrenched ideals and ensure unity, freedom, dignity and fundamental rights. It is my firm believe that all Bramptonians and others participating in this festival will be enlightened better in understanding these ideals treasured by all human beings.

I am particularly thankful to Brampton City Mayor and her colleagues for affording this opportunity to expose our Eelam culture and traditions to all our fellow citizens.

It seems to me that the end product of human civilizations is the democracy we find in Canada entrenched with multiculturalism, human freedom, fundamental Human Rights and human dignity. This cultural event would not be possible without the outstanding support of its sponsors, volunteers and community supporters all of whom share the vision of our Brampton Tamil Association. Once again, I am very happy to welcome all to our Eelam Cultural areana and see and enjoy our rich culture and hospitality.

T. Kiruba

President, Brampton Tamil Association

Kiruba Thuraiappah

Carabram

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House of Commons

Rathika Sitsabaiesan
Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge River

A Personal Message from MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan

Dear Friends,

I wish to extend my warmest greetings to everyone participating this weekend in Carabram 2013. This is the 31st anniversary of this great multicultural festival and the presence of the Eelam Pavillion is a joy to behold. I want to congratulate the Brampton Tamil Association for all of their hard work in making the Eelam Pavillion a possibility.

Carabram is a wonderful opportunity to see the incredible level of interculturalism in Brampton and celebrate the various cultures that make Brampton and Canada great. Such diversity is unique and special, and having the pleasure of not only showing off our own Tamil culture, but participating in others is an exceptional opportunity.

I am so proud of my Tamil heritage and culture, and it is always such a pleasure to share our rich cultural traditions and history with others. I am particularly fond of traditional Tamil dance, and as some of you may have seen before, I enjoy performing as often as I can!

I am sure everyone, both Tamils and non-Tamils will enjoy the food, music, performances, and activities brought to you by the Brampton Tamil Association at Carabram 2013.

Sincerely,

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP
Scarborough-Rouge River

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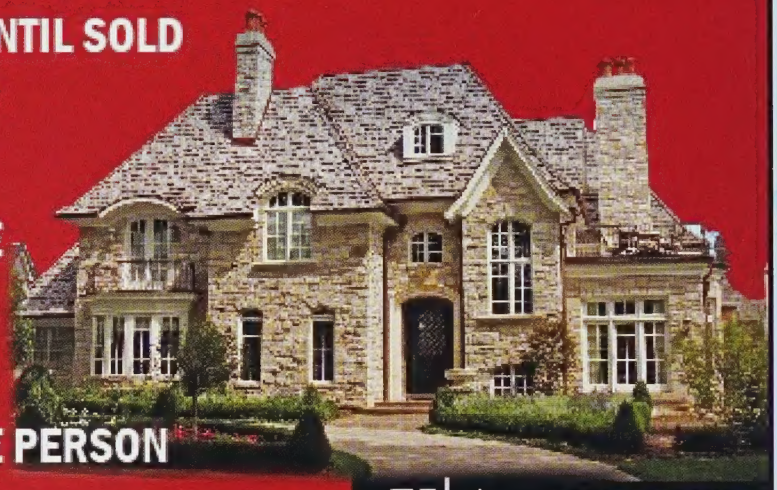

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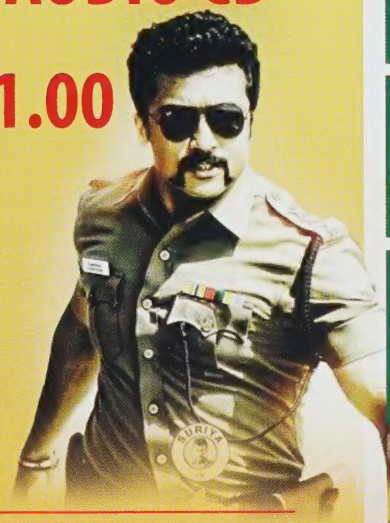

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The library has a long history, dating back to the 1930s, a full 20 years before the Jaffna Public Library was formally inaugurated. From its early origins as a reading room, which was inaugurated on August 1, 1934, the library had evolved as a part of the Jaffna psyche and the desire of its people to attain higher levels of education.

On May 16, 1952, Sam A. Sabapathy, the then Jaffna Mayor, constituted the Jaffna Central Library Board as the governing body. The foundation stone for this library was laid on May 29, 1954 by the Mayor of Jaffna and a host of dignitaries, including top diplomats

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representing India, the United States and the United Kingdom. The Asian Development Programme and the Indian High Commissioner gave monetary assistance. Cultural programmes and public lotteries were organized to raise resources. Traders gifted vehicles for the project.

The name Jaffna Public Library, was given on October 17, 1958, during the construction phase. The library was opened on October 11, 1959, even as the construction was going on by Alfred T.Durayappa, the then Jaffna Mayor.

Burning of Jaffna library was a watershed event in May 31 to June 2 1981. The destruction of the Jaffna Public Library was the incident which appeared to cause the most distress to the people of Jaffna. At the time it was South Asia`s biggest library. The 95,000 volumes of the Public Library destroyed by the fire included numerous culturally important and irreplaceable manuscripts.

After the Jaffna public Library was destroyed, the Municipal Council decided to decentralize the library services. A decision was taken to open Branches Library Services in several places, such as Chundikuly Branch Library, Nallur Branch Library, Vannar Ponnai Branch Library, Gurunagar Branch Library etc. to safeguard the book collection and to give full services to all ratepayers of the Municipal Council. It was also decided to enrich the Branch Libraries in a particular field. According to this decision, every Branch Library is specialized in a field.

The historical Jaffna Public Library is now renovated and has started its services again.

Source: www.lankanewspapers.com

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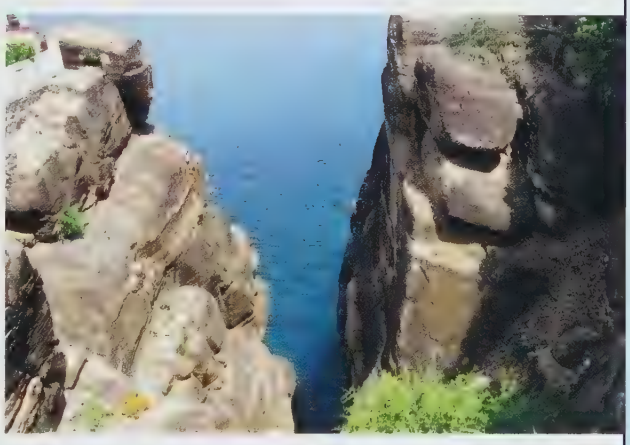
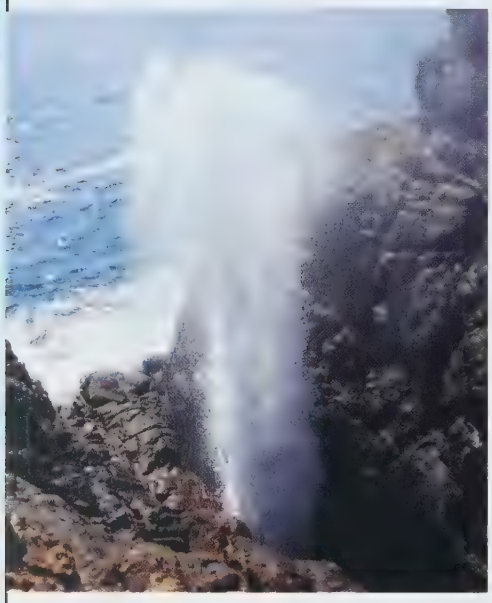
THIRUKONESWARAM TEMPLE

Thirukoneswaram was one of the ancient temples in Sri Lanka. In the 16th century, it had one thousand pillars and esteemed to be one of the richest temples in the South East Asia. It had in its possession large amounts of gold, pearls, precious stones, and silk, which have been endowed over one thousand years. The Temple was demolished by the Portuguese Commander of Army Constantine de Sa de Menzes in 1624 and used the rubbles to build a well fortified Fort to prevent the Port of Trincomalee falling to the rivals. The other destroyed ancient temples are Berndi Kovil, near Avissavela, in 1552, Muneswaram near Chillaw, in 1575, the Vishnu temple at Dondra, in 1588, Thirukatheeswaram, in 1589, and Nallur Kandasamy Kovil, in 1621.



The stones from the destroyed Thirukoneswaram temple were used to build Fort Trincomalee for the protection of Portuguese rule and the Fort changed hands to Dutch in 1658 and to the British in 1782. There was no worship at Thirukoneswaram for nearly 180 years and no temple until 1963. However, the British, with religious tolerance, allowed worship at Swami Malai. The hill on which the temple stood was called Swami Malai.



Thirukonamalai is mentioned in ancient Hindu chronicles of Dekshana Kailasa Puranam, Ramayanam, and Kanda Puranam. Accurate timing of these events has not been established. However, these chronicles appear to narrate events that took place approximately four to five thousand years before the birth of Christ.

During the destruction, some of the articles and statues of deities were saved by the devotees and were unearthed later in 1950. These unearthed items now form part of newly built Temple. The ancient statues made of gold and copper were found in 1944/1950. The Hindus have preserved their heritage through many generations and have rebuilt the destroyed Thirukoneswaram Temple in 1963. The initiation ceremony, Maha Kumbebishekam, of the newly built Thirukoneswaram temple took place on April 3, 1963. Ceylon was lucky to have two Hindu temples for which laudatory hymns have been sung by eminent Saints. Saint Thirugnanasambantha Moorthi Nayananar sang in praise of the Lord of Thirukoneswaram and both he and Sundaramurthi Swamigal have sung in praise of the Lord of Thiruketheeswaram that was instrumental in creating an urge for rebuilding the ancient Hindu temples in Sri Lanka.

EELAM

TAMILS CULTURE, HERITAGE & HISTORY

Pandara Vanniyan was a rebel Tamil chief from the part of eelam who was known as one of last native chiefs to challenge British rule in the Island nation of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is situated at southern tip of India. Sri Lanka is the name of the island earlier known as Ceylon. "Ceylon" is the name by which the island came to be known to the outside world after Portuguese occupied it in the early 16th Century.

Before longer go there were two states in the island, the Tamil state and the Sinhala state.

The Tamils and the Sinhalese, the two indigenous peoples, called the country by various titles at different periods. The new name "Sri Lanka" was bestowed by the Republican constitution on 22 May 1972 by the Sinhala government.

Ceylon is a country of heterogeneous culture, with two separate and distinct ethno-linguistic nations, namely the Sinhala nation and the Tamil nation and four great religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. For reasons of history, the Sinhalese live in the west, south and centre, and the Tamils in the north and east. Until the administrative unification of the country by the British in 1833, this pattern of distribution was one of mutual exclusiveness. This was a natural result of differences in language, religion and culture and of political organisation from time immemorial under separate Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms. The areas the Sinhalese and the Tamils occupied were their traditional and exclusive sovereign homelands, to which they owed their first loyalty.

Tamil Culture

Tamil culture is nothing else but the Tamil way of life, a pat-tern of gracious living that has been formed during the centuries of Tamil history. It has been conditioned by the land, the climate, the language, the literature, the religions, the customs, the laws, the festivals, the food and the games of the Tamil people, by the clothes, the jewellery, traditional music and dance and musical instruments associated with them.

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The Tamil Language and Tamil Literature

The Tamil Language has been spoken basically in its present form in the island for the last two thousand years and it continues even now to be the living language for forty to fifty million people - about forty million people in India, more than two million people in Ceylon and over two million people living scattered over Malaysia, Figi, Mauritius, South Africa, Vietnam and Indonesia and even Trinidad Tamil is as much a classical language as Greek, Latin or Sanskrit, with the difference that while her ancient contemporaries have changed beyond recognition or been long regarded as "dead", Tamil continues to be one of the most vigorous of modern languages, and perhaps offers the only example in history of an ancient classical tongue which has survived to this day yet remains young as it was two thousands years ago. The rich and hoary Tamil Literature has made definite contributions to world thought and letters. The love poetry of the Tamils is the produce of a people among whom the finest ideals of courtship and wedlock had long been cherished. The ethical poetry of the Tamils has been the wonder of all foreigners who have studied it.

If the English be the language of commerce, French the language of diplomacy, Italian the language of love and German the language of philosophy, then Tamil is the language of devotion.

The tradition of Bhakthi and the ideal of tolerance explain the fact that nearly every world religion can claim in Tamil a voluminous literature. Tamil culture has been enriched by poetical works of Saivaites, of Vaishnavites, of Jains, of Buddhists, of Muslims, of Catholics and of Protestants. No other language in the world has been the vehicle of the epic poetry of so many different religions.

Culinary Art

The Tamil food is comparatively simple and nourishing, besides being very healthy.Rice is the staple food of the Tamils and it is cooked in numerous ways. "Rice" is a Tamil word.

Though majority of the Ceylon Tamils are Hindus, yet all of them are not vegetarians. Rice is eaten with dishes called "Kari" (The word "curry" is derived from the Tamil word Kari). As the Tamil homeland skirts the north-eastern coastal areas, fish has become an important part of the Tamil diet. A variety of food is made from rice flour and flour made from maize and millet. Coconut milk and spices form important ingredients in Kari. Pulses and leafy vegetables are commonly used. There are a few post prandial delicacies peculiar to the Eelam Tamils. "Rasa Valli Kilanku" (King Yam pudding) is one such delicacy.

Clothes

Tamil women wear seelai (saree) and chaddai (blouse). Seelai is a piece of cloth six yards in length, usually of bright colour, made of cotton, silk or artificial thread. The seelai can be worn in many ways and the style may indicate the locality or the community of the woman. Tamil girls wear paavaaddai (long skirt) and thaavani (half saree). The traditional dress of the Tamil man is Verddi and Saalvai. Verddi is a piece of white cloth of 6 or 12 feet in length. On festive occasions the men wear silk verddi and saalvai and a collar-less shirt. Tamil men also wear a head dress called the thalaippa for protection from the heat.

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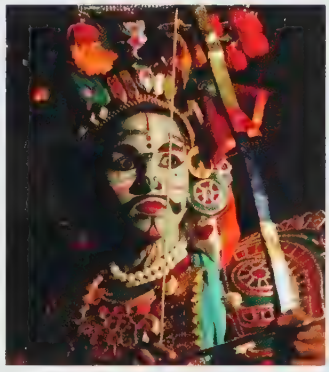
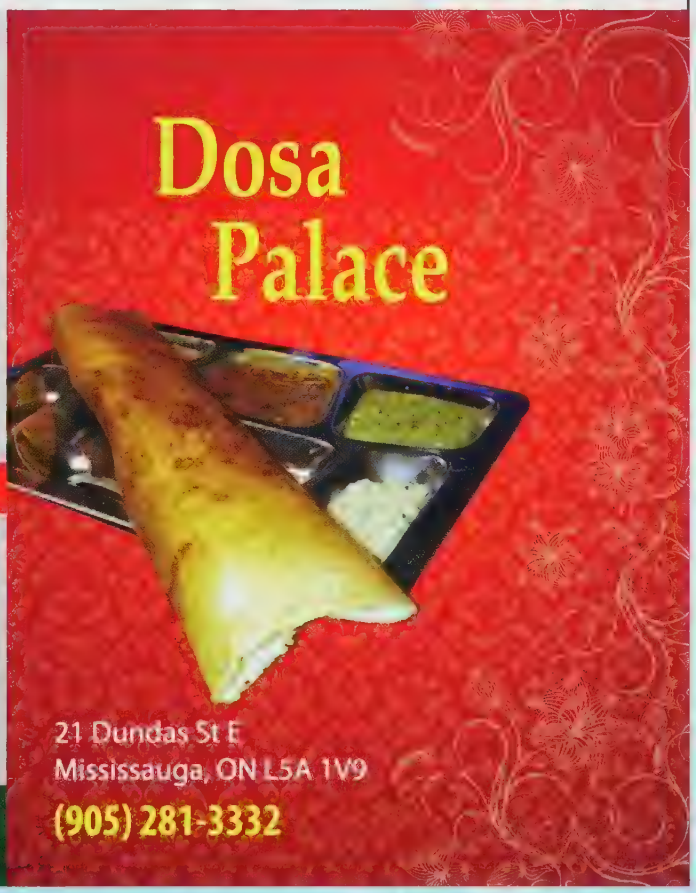


Folk drama called "Naadu Kooththu" is the traditional form of art inherited particularly from Tamils of the eastern region This vibrant form of art is a blend of dance, music and dialogue, with dance as the key element. The basic orchestral instrument is the drum which is played generally by the producer/ director of the play called the "Annaavi".The drum, the main musical instrument is the herald of folk drama and is the pivot around which the whole folk play rotates. The measured and rhythmic beats of the drum guide the actors to dance, providing the required signals to them, to switch from one situation to another. The other instrument of the orchestra is a pair of cymbals. The musical notes of the cymbals are vital to prompt the actors to sing and the chorus to accompany them. The folk plays are staged in front of temples or in close proximity, because of availability of adequate space for a large open air theatre capable of accommodating audience from several villages and the religious flavour of plays staged.

Festivals

The major festival is Pongal in January which celebrates the arrival of fresh harvest; Navaratri which is celebrated for nine days in September and October marks the victory of Goddess Shakti over the forces of evil; Deepavali is the festival of lights and fireworks in October or November. All major temples have chariot festivals at different seasons of the year. There are special festivals on occasions organised by the temples. National Colour The national colour of the Tamils is aura or gold which is also the colour of ripe paddy or rice seed.



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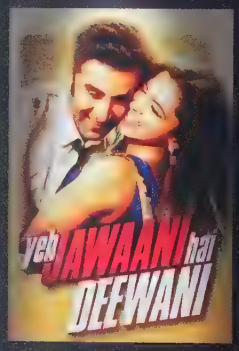

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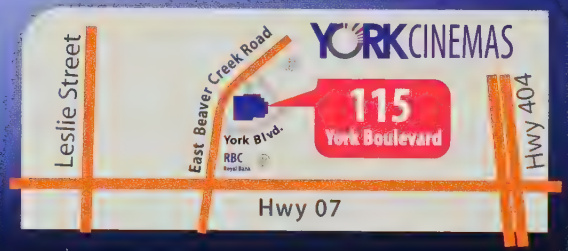

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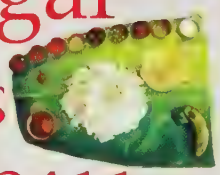

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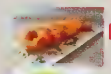
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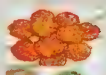
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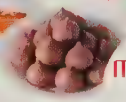
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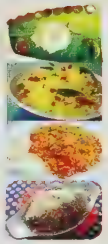

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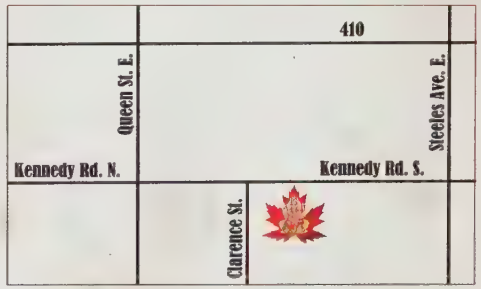

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YEARLY FESTIVALS OF EELAMITES

Hindu Festivals

Thai Pongal

Pongal is one of the major festivals for Tamils and often referred to as "thamizhar thirunaaL". At the beginning of the tamil month "thai" it is celebrated for three days: first day devoted to getting rid of old things (Bhogi), second day involves main Pongal celebrations followed by Maattu Pongal on the third day. Many extend these to a fourth day called "kannip pongal" or "kaaNum pongal" when youngers go around and seek the blessings of the elders. On Bhogi day, a bon fire is lit with all the agricultural and household wastes.

On the Pongal day, Sun makes its moves towards north/ enters Makara raasi (the zodiac sign of Capricorn the goat) and marks the beginning of Uttaraayana punyakaalam. Traditionally, this period is considered an auspicious time and the veteran Bhishma of Mahabharata chose to die during this period. After he fell to the arrows of Arjuna Bhishma used his boon to choose the time of his death. He waited on a bed of arrows to depart from this world only during this period. It is believed that those who die in this period have no rebirth.

To farmers Pongal marks the beginning of the harvesting season. People take oil bath early in the morning and wear new clothes. Sweet pongal and special sweets are prepared for the occasion. Freshly cut Sugarcane is used for decoratation and later consumption by all.

Mattu Pongal is a celebration by the agrarian community that thankfully acknowledges the participation of the animals mainly bulls in ploughing the fields and assisting the farmers in raising a good crop. The animals are decorated and are included in some races, both to entertain and to boost their endurance capacity. The festival is known as "Jallikattu". These races include cock fights, bull fights and ram fights. "Thiruvalluvar Day" is celebrated on this Mattu Pongal day.

Thai Poosam

Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati is worshipped in on Thai Pusam. Special Poojas and festivities take place on this Poosam day to the god Murugan in Hindu temples all over the world.

Many temples have the boat festival (theppa utsavam) on this day when the Lord would be coming out over a float on the temple pond.

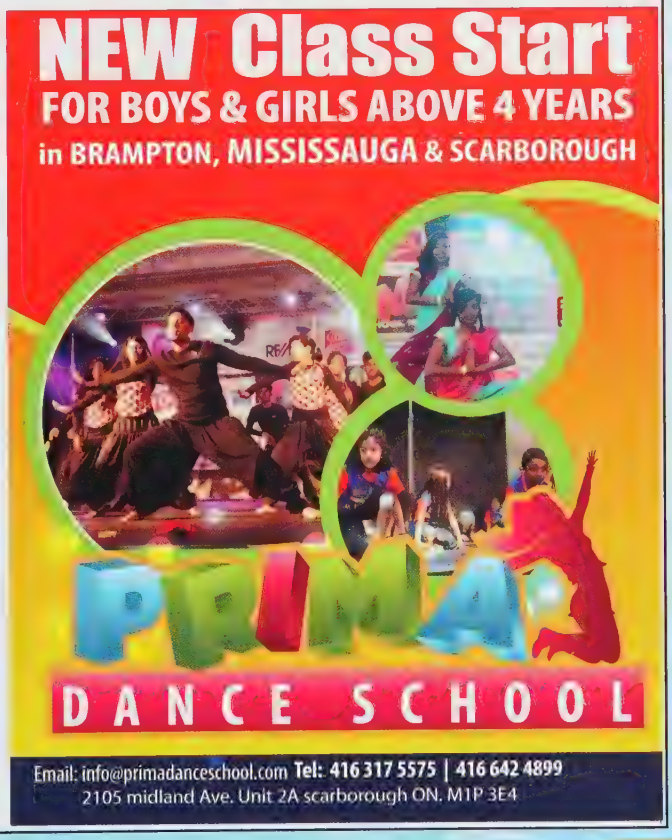
As a mark of dedication and respect, people engage in "fire walk"- walk over a path of burning coal. They exit the path miraculously without being scorched, signifying Kartikeya's everlasting protection. A webpage on thaipoosam.

Maasi Maham

Celebrated on the Makam day in the tamil month of Maasi. On this day, the deities are taken around in procession to the nearby rivers/tanks/sea for bath. It is an important festival day for Lord Muruga. Once in 12 years, the Maham festival is celebrated in a grand manner (known as Mahamaham).

Maha Sivarathri

Maha Sivarathri is a festival day devoted to Lord Siva, celebrated on the amavaasai day in the month of Maasi. Sivaratri also signifies the end of winter and the arrival of spring. Unlike each Hindu festival which begins with the ritualistic worship of the presiding deity followed by a feast, Sivaratri differs in that one dedicates the entire day of twenty-four hours to the worship of Lord Siva. In the evening people generally go to a nearby temple where in the company of many others they listen to recitals of the legends and their meanings. They do not sleep that night, but remain awake. The worship continues throughout the night either by way of chanting the Rudram, singing in eulogy of Lord Siva or/and listening to religious discourses interpreting the legends associated with the festival. Mahasivarathri is celebrated in a grand scale in the god Siva's temples. In the rituals, leaves of a forest tree Bilva (Aegle marmelos/wood apple) are traditionally used in the services.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Sri Rama Navami

Sri Rama Navami as a festival marks the birth of Lord Rama but is celebrated and worshipped in the form of re-creating the wedding between Lord Rama and Sita by the Hindus seeking well being of all people. Such community celebrations are held in not only Rama temples but also in many other temples too. Usually such ritualistic wedding celebration in homes is quite uncommon. The ritual of Rama's wedding is concluded with prasadam of 'vada pappu' (soaked lentil) and panakam (sherbat made of jaggery dissolved in water to which pepper powder and cardamom powder are added).

Panguni Uthiram

Panguni Uthiram is celebrated as the Wedding day for the Gods/Celestial couples in all temples of Tamilnadu. It is celebrated over a 10-day period in many Murugan Temples. Inscriptions indicate existence of these celebrations as early as that of the Chola King Rajaraja Chola.

Tamil New Year Day

As the name indicates, this day marks the beginning of the Tamil New Year (and the tamil month Chithirai). Tamil New Year comes in April month of each year.

Chitra Pournami

Chitra Pournami or Chitra Purnima is a Tamil ceremony observed on the Purnima day (full moon day) in the Tamil month of Chithirai (April–May). Chitra Pournami ritual commemorates Chitragupta, who according to the scriptures is the assistant of Lord Yama, the God of Death. The day is also dedicated to Indra, the head of Devas. It is on this day that the star Chitra and full moon come together.

Chitragupta also means collection of pictures. It is believed that Chitragupta examines the good and bad performances of the person. When a person dies, his soul first goes to Lord Yama, where Chitragupta tallies the deeds and report it to Yama. Special worship is done in Honour of Lord Chitragupta – the Divine Accountant – who keeps an account of our karmas and appeals for forgiveness for our shortcomings are raised on this day.

It is a customary to eat curd rice without salt on this day and to fast without eating anything else. In any case avoiding salt in food items throughout the day is recommended on this day, if possible.

On this day, special pooja will be conducted at temples and people take bath in holy rivers and temple ponds to wash away the sins committed.

It's also believed that, Chithra Pournami, dedicated to late mothers.

Vaikasi Visakam

The pournami day of the tamil month Vaikasi is celebrated in grand manner in Murugan Temples (Palani, Thiruchendoor,...) when large number of people go to the temple carrying "Kavadi". Valli Kalyanam is celebrated in Murugan Temples on Vaikaasi Visaakam day.

Vaikasi Visakam also marks the birthday of Alwar Saint Nammalwar and this is celebrated in Kancheepuram Varadaraja Perumal Temple as "Garuda utcavam". Lord Varadaraja is taken in a Garuda vahana to Nammalwar sannadhi for blessing of the latter.

Aadi pandigai/Aadi perukku

Aadi is the fourth month according to the Tamil Almanac. The first day (according to Tamil Calander, abd usually falling on July 16) of the month of Aadi – July, according to the Tamil Almanac. Aadi Pirappu is celebrated (Birth of Aadi month)

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on this day, making Kozhukattai and Aadi Koozh and sharing with relatives and friends.

The month of Aadi is considered inauspicious and sacred for Shakthi worship by the Hindus. Special poojas were performed for the Goddess Durkai. Goddess Durkai was decorated with lemons,garlands and silk saree.

Young women who are unmarried throng the temple especially on Aadi Sevvai during the month of Aadi to make vows, fast and worship the Goddess to invoke her blessings to find life partners for them.

Aadi amaavaasai

Aadi Amavasai, a day sacred to obsequies for the manes. This special day is dedicated to our forefathers, which is observed annually during the Tamil month of July. The new moon in the Tamil month of Aadi is observed with special prayers, poojas and offering of food to the forefathers. Amavasai is a new moon begins its new cycle.

Keerimala in Jaffna Peninsula is popular for Aadi Amavasai. A special vegetable called "Kaaththottikaai", which got a bitter taste, is consumed on this special day. It's specially sold on this day in Jaffna. It's also believed that, Aadi Amavasai, is dedicated to late fathers. Young unmarried girls and married women usually do not take part in rites carried out on these days. Elderly women who have lost their husbands participate in the religious rites.

Aadi pooram

Aadi Pooram is celebrated in all Hindu temples in the month called Aadi or Ashadha, corresponding to the English months of July-August, when the asterism Pooram (Delta Leonis) is in the ascendancy. The festival is observed to propitiate the goddess Sakti Devi who is said to have come into this world on this occasion to bless the people.

Traditionally, it is also believed to be the day the Goddess attained puberty in the divine form of Lalithambikai on "Aadi Pooram" day ." Aadi Pooram" falls on the Pooram Natchathirai in the Tamil month of "Aadi".

Andal, the incarnation of Mother Earth, Bhoodevi, is one of the twelve Alwars, great devotees of Vishnu. "Aadi Pooram" and "Aani Thirumanjanam" are important festivals to Andal.

Krishna Jayanthi/Gokulashtami

The birth of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu in the Dwapar Yuga, is celebrated all over India as Krishna Janmashtami. This day is marked by religious festivity and devotion. Lord Krishna or "He who is all-attractive", descended on this earth to subdue the rakshasas ruthlessly and save mankind from all evils. He is regarded as the epitome of transcendental qualities which made him the most loved one.

The modern day festivity recreates the birth of the Lord. It is celebrated with utmost gaiety and fervor in Mathura and Brindavan. The towns are colorfully decorated wearing a festive look. The main temple at Mathura and Brindavan are bedecked with flowers and Lord Krishna is clothed in jewellery. The rituals begin ahead of time in the evening and culminate at midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. A crawling image of Krishna is cradled amidst singing of bhajans and chantings of Hare Rama Hare Krishna.

People usually observe fast on this day. In the houses, mango leaves are tied to the doorways to mark the auspicious occasion. Colorful floral designs are drawn on the front yard. Inside the house, a small woodden mandapam is erected and decorated with flowers and plantain leaves. An icon of a crawling Krishna in a silver cradle or leaf is placed in the mandapam. In some houses, a typical setting of Gokulam is arranged with mud images of Devaki, Vasudeva with little Krishna perched in a basketon his head, a cow, besides other things related to Krishna's legends. Small foot marks produced by impressions with rice powder mixed with water are believed to symbolically recreate the coming of Krishna into peoples' homes.

Janmashtami

The birth anniversary of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu and the author of the Bhagavad Gita (Song Celestial), is observed all over. It is celebrated with special eclat at Mathura and Brindavan where Lord Krishna spent his childhood. Night-long prayers are offered and religious hymns are sung in temples. Scenes are enacted from Lord Krishna's early life.

Ganesha Chaturthi

Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati is widely worshipped as the munificent god of wisdom. Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival in his honour and is celebrated by Hindus'. Ganesha (also called Ganapati /Vighneshvara or Vighnahartaa) is the Lord of and destroyer of obstacles. People mostly worship Him asking for siddhi, success in undertakings, and buddhi, intelligence. He is worshipped before any venture is started. He is also the God of education, knowledge and wisdom, literature, and the fine arts.

Hindus's in all over the world, celebrates with much enthusiasm and devotion.

Dasara/Navarathi, Saraswathi Pooja, Vijaya Dhasami

This is among the most auspicious days in the Hindu calendar and comes as the finale of the nine-day festival, Navaraatri. this festival of victory is preceded by worship of Saraswati the Goddess of Learning and of Durgaa the Goddess of Strength. Grand processions of all Gods and goddesses are taken out in every town and village on this day, signifying the victory of the forces of righteousness over those of wickedness.

Vijaya Dashami is preceded by the Aayudha Pooja on the Mahaanavami day, when not only the weapons are worshipped by the warriors, but the blacksmith, the potter, the carpenter, the tailor, the mason, the typist, the musician, the artist and

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every type of technical worker - worships his instruments and tools. Buses, trucks and huge machines in factories are all decorated and worshipped

Dussehra and Durga Puja

Among the most popular of all festivals, it symbolises the triumph of good over evil. Every region observes this 10-day festival in a special way. In the North, 'Ram Lila' recitations and music recall the life of the legendary hero, Rama. Large fire cracker--stuffed effigies of Ravana, symbolising evil, explode to the cheers of thousands of spectators. In Kulu against the backdrop of snow-covered mountains, villagers dressed in their colourful best assemble to take out processions of local deities accompanied by music on pipes and drums. In Karnataka, Dussehra is celebrated with magnificent pomp and pageantry. In Bengal and the East, it is called 'Durga Puja'. Images of Goddess Durga are worshipped for four days and, on the last day, taken out in a procession and immersed in a river or the sea.

Vijayadashmi or Dussera

Vijayadashmi or Dussera, the day of victory, after nine days of battle is celebrated by all Hindu families. Dussera is one of the four auspicious days of the year. On the same day, Rama, an avatar of Vishnu fought Ravana, a ten headed demon and restored dharma (righteousness) on earth. In rural India, children returned to school on Vijayadashmi which is also dedicated to Saraswati. On this day their teachers would draw the symbol of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning on their slates. On Vijayadashmi, people worship weapons, tools and implements of their trade. In the second half of Ashwin, Diwali lights up the sky, the festival of lights that celebrates the return of Rama and his coronation in Ayodhya. People light lamps and adorn doorways with flower garlands to welcome Rama, Sita and Lakshmana home after fourteen years of exile. Dhanteras follows Diwali when wealth in worshipped. Narakchaturdashi is a festival that honours the heroic Krishna who rescued 16,000 princesses from Naraka's bondage.

Deepavali /Diwali

Deepavali, the festival of lights, comes close on the heels of Dasara. It is a festival that marks the victory of good over evil. Deepavali means a "row of lights", and it brings along with it glowing happiness and the touch of sparklers all around. In India, Deepavali is synonymous with the nightly bursting of fire- crackers and the beautiful decoration of the houses with earthenware lamps which is a feast for the eyes.

In Eelam, Deepavali celebrations begin at dawn as early as around three in the morning. The family members are given an oil massage, followed by aarti and then the children burst crackers to mark the joyous day. New clothes and exchange of gifts goes without saying.

On Deepavali day, when darkness unfolds itself, you can see a spectacular illumination of tiny flickering lamps adorning in rows - at homes, buildings and streets. And watch out as you look up to the sky ! Hundreds of fire crackers can be seen glowing and then bursting as though it was a battle of glows and sparks in the skies.

Deepavali is incomplete without the multi-colored and noisy fire crackers. From simple colored sparklers, pencils, flower pots, ground chakras (wheels), Vishnu chakras, rockets to the long ladi / garland crackers, you have a wide range to choose from.

The festival of lights is one of the most beautiful of Indian festivals. It comes 21 days after Dussehra and celebrates the return of Rama to Ayodhya after his 14-year exile. Countless flickering oil lamps and lights are lit in houses all over the country making it a night of enchantment. Worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and fireworks and festivities are an essential part of the occasion.

Vaikunta Ekadasi

Ekaadasi, the 11th day of the lunar fortnight is auspicious to Vishnu. Vaikunta Ekaadasi, falling in December- January, is celebrated as a special festival when the "gates of Heaven" ceremoniously open for devotees to enter.

Muslim Festivals

Ramzan

The holy month of Ramzan is very auspicious to the Muslims the world over. It is believed that God will shower His blessings on those who pray to God whole heartedly, with complete devotion, surrendering themselves totally to His will. It is believed that the holy Quran, the holy book of Muslims, came into existence during this month. Prophet Mohammad who compiled this was an illiterate person. But he was chosen by God to be His messenger. Whenever any problem arose, He would get "Vahi" (inspiration from God). He would become red and would speak out spontaneously. All these utterings were jotted down by His disciples and during this month they were compiled in the form of the holy Quran. It is a message from God to the mankind.

This is the holy month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Soum (fasting) is called Rozah in Urdu. Fast is observed for the entire month (Lunar) of Ramadan every year by the followers of Islam. Fasting through out the month of Ramzan is compulsory for all Muslims. But exceptions are made in the case of the sick and the travelling.

Id-ul-Fitr

Celebrates the end of Ramzan, the Muslim month of fasting. It is an occasion of feasting and rejoicing. The faithful gather in mosques to pray; friends and relatives meet to exchange greetings.

Bakrid

Bakrid, the festival of sacrifice is an important celebration,

which falls on the last month of the Islamic Calendar. The Muslims traditionally offer the sacrifice of goats/sheep/camels as part of the festival. Bakrid, also known as Id-Ul-Zuha coincides with the Haj pilgrimage at Mecca. The significance of the festival is the commemoration of the ordeals of Prophet Ibrahim. According to popular belief, Prophet Ibrahim was put to a tough test by Allah to prove his faith. He was asked to sacrifice his son Ismail and without any hesitation Prophet Ibrahim blindfolded himself and made the offering on the Mount of Mina near Mecca. When Prophet Ibrahim opened his eyes, he was astonished to find a goat lying upon the altar and his son Ismail standing in front of him. Ever since, faithfuls of Islam the world over offer sacrifices on the festival day.

Muharram

Muharram is about the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (Raji An) and his family by laying down their lives at Karbala (in present day Iraq) for the protection of democracy. Their selfless sacrifice, service to humanity and protection of their religious order resulted in their giving up their own lives. Remembering him and following the path shown by him is the greatest tribute that humanity can pay him. This in fact is the greatest message of Muharram.

Commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the holy Prophet Mohammed, and observed by the Shi'ite Muslims, who take out processions of colourfully decorated 'Tazias', which are paper and bamboo replicas of the martyr's tomb at Karbala in Iraq. The processions are specially impressive at Lucknow. In parts of the South, tiger dancers--men painted over with stripes and wearing tiger masks--lead the procession.

Miladi Nabi

Milad-un-nabi marks the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). It is believed that Muhammad (PBUH) was sent by God as the last messenger for the renaissance of Islam.

Christian Festivals

Good Friday

Services and recitals of religious music are held in hundreds of churches all over the world.

Easter

The Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ is celebrated with enthusiasm by the members of the community. Processions are taken out in some parts of the country.

Christmas

Born nearly two thousand years ago, Christians believe Him to be the Son of God. Whether Jesus was really born on December 25th, no one can say for certain. It was chosen because it already was a holiday in ancient times -a pagan feast. But pagans did not believe in Jesus. Around the third century there was an attempt to fix the day of His birth by tying it to a festival of the Nativity kept in Rome in the time of Bishop Telesphorus (between A.D. 127 and 139). Some Christmas observances of the Roman Church are said to be of Bishop Telesphorus' appointment. There was also a story of Christians being massacred in the catacombs on the day of the Nativity between A.D. 161 and 180 but the exact year, again is not known. In A.D. 300, a similar event is said to have taken place at Nicomedia in the reign of Diocletian. Neither of these stories seem reliable as a measure of the day Christ was born.

It was believed the Nativity took place, indeed, on the 25th of the month; but which month was uncertain and every month at one time or another has been assigned. During the time of Clement of Alexandria (before 220) five dates in three different months of the Egyptian year were said to be the Nativity. One of those corresponds to the December 25th date. During the third century, it was a common belief that Christ was born on the winter solstice based on an interpetation of some prophetic scriptures and an idea that the Annunciation and the Crucifixion both occured on the same day - March 25th. Another third century set of writings, The Apostolic Constitutions, indicate the Apostles ordained that the feast be kept on the 25th day of the ninth month which, at that time meant December. The works of John Selden, published in 1661, suggested that in the early Christian ages the winter solstice fell on the 8th of the Kalends of January, that is, December 25th, though not accepted universally by modern day students who put the day between the end of July and the end of October.

The Roman Church finally fixed December 25th as the birthday of Jesus Christ after the great persecution that took place around A.D. 310; which connects the visitation of the wise men from the East, being celebrated twelve days later. Though questioned for several generations by the Eastern Church, the Roman day became universal in the fifth century.

Source: www.tamilculturewaterloo.org

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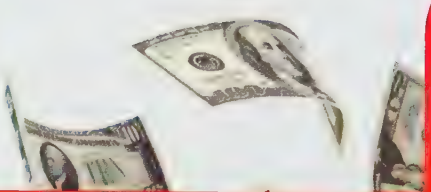

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SOME ASPECTS OF EELAM HERITAGE AT A GLANCE

Country: Eelam

"Eelam" a teardrop island in the Indian Ocean is located at the tip of South India. The name "Eelam" is found in ancient Sangam Literature which is supposed to have written around 500 BC.This is confirmed when we find the name of a prominant poet belonging to sangam period (around 500 BC) as Eelaththu Poothanthevanar which means Poothan Thevan hailing from Eelam. (Akanaanoou :88, 231, 307; Kurunthokai: 189, 360, 343; Nattinai: 88)

Sources: Sangam Literature; History of Ceylon by Dr G.C. Mendis Professor Karthigesu Indrapala claims that Eela the stem of Eelam is attested in Ceylon in centuries before the common era as a name of an ethnic group and eventually it came to be applied to the island as Eelam.

Language:

Tamil – Perhaps the only living clssical language still beeing used by the Tamil people in Education including Science, Technology including Electronics and in Administration.

Tamil language has 30 alphabets, 12 are vowels and 18 are consonants.

Tamil Alphabets - Vowels

	தொல்காப்பியர்கால உயிர் வட்டெழுத்துக்கள்
500 B.C.	𑀅 𑀆 𑀇 𑀈 𑀉 𑀊 𑀌 𑀍 𑀎 𑀏 𑀐
600 A.D.	அ ஆ இ ஈ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ ஔ

Tamil Alphabets - Consonants

தொல்காப்பியர்கால மெய் வட்டெழுத்துக்கள்																	
𑀓்	𑀔்	𑀕்	𑀖்	𑀚்	𑀛்	𑀜்	𑀞்	𑀟்	𑀠்	𑀡்	𑀢்	𑀣்	𑀤்	𑀥்	𑀦்	𑀧்	𑀨்
க்	ங்	ச்	ஞ்	ட்	ண்	த்	ந்	ப்	ம்	ய்	ர்	ல்	வ்	ழ்	ள்	ற்	ன்

It is musical and poetical in nature.

"If Latin is the Language of Law and of Medicine
French the Language of the Diplomacy
German the Language of Science
And English the Language of Commerce
Then Tamil is the Language of Bhakti
The devotion to the sacred and the holy."

Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam

"Though Tamil is a Dravidian language with an ancient and uninterrupted literary and artistic tradition, it is studied in most foreign universities mostly because of its peculiar linguistic characteristics or because it is a tool for field work in Tamil districts." A Tamil poet of the Pre-Christinan Sangham era Kaniyan Poongundranar sang "Yaathum Oore, Yaavarum Kelir which the renowned Catholic Tamil Scholar Rev Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam translated as
"All the world is my world, all humanity is my fraternity".

Base Ten Number System:

Not only they developed their Tamil Language but also the number system with base ten. A decimal number system including place value, containing ten digits from 0, 1, 2, ...up to 9 wich enabled people all over the world to think and write any number, small or big with ease and is easy to communicate without confusion. The base ten number system was one of the important factors responsible for the rapid revolution that took place during the medieval period in Science and Industries.

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Education:

Eelam Tamils have achieved an enviable position in Education, Sciences, Medicine, Technology, Commerce, Arts and Culture and in he Philosophical Studies of Saiva-ism

Arts and Culture:

Music: Tamils developed their Music described as 'Thamil Isai' (wrongly described as Carnata Isai) as early as 400 B.C. based on seven notes called 'AElisai' (Vopir)viz Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Tha, Ni. and recognised as one of the most advanced and accomplished Music in the world

Tamil Musical Notes called 'Surams' 400 B.C.

Seven Notes	Kural	Thutham	Kaikilai	Uzhai	Ili	Vilari	Taram
Notation	Sa	Ri	Ga	Ma	Pa	Tha	Ni
Tamil Notation	ச	ரி	க	ம	ப	த	நி

Dance: Baratha Nattiam is a dance form developed over many centuries and is cosidered as one of the scientifically, aesthetically and philosophi-caly developed fom of dancing. The philosophy contained in the dance form of Lord Natarasar, was found to be in agreement with the concepts of the origin of the universe by the Nuclear Scientists that they decided to erect the dance form of the statue of Lord Nadrasar in front of the lagest world famous CERN laborataries in Switserland in Europe.

Baratha Nattiam

of Lord Nadarasar in front of CERN Nuclear Laboratory

Yarl

Musical Pillars Nellaiappar Temple

Historical figures

Eelattu Poothathevanar - Sangam era poet
Ellalan – 200 B.C.E Tamil King in Sri Lanka.
Cankilli I (1519–1560) - a prominent king of The Jaffna Kingdom.
Cankilli II Last King of Jaffna (1617–1619).
Pandara Vannian - Leading rebel Vanni chieftain who was defeated by the British colonials in 1811.
Arumaipperumal (died 1803) - Leading rebel Batticaloa chieftain who was captured by the British colonials in 1803.
Velupillai Prabhaharan – Eelam Freedom fighter

Some of the Great Eelam Scholars in Tamil Language and Sciences Early Sankam Period (400 B.C.)

1. Eelaththu Poothan Thevanar (500 B.C.: His compositions are included in anthologies known as Nattrinai, Korunthokai, and Puranaanooru. Other Known poets are Mudingarayar, Musiri Asiriyar, Neelakandanar and Eela Nagar.

Medieval period (1619-1796): During the Portuguese and Dutch colonial periods (1619–1796), Muttukumara Kavirajar is the earliest known author. He was followed by Arumuga Navalar, who wrote and published a number of books.

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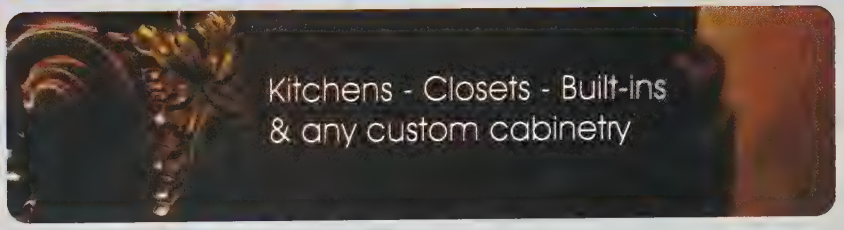

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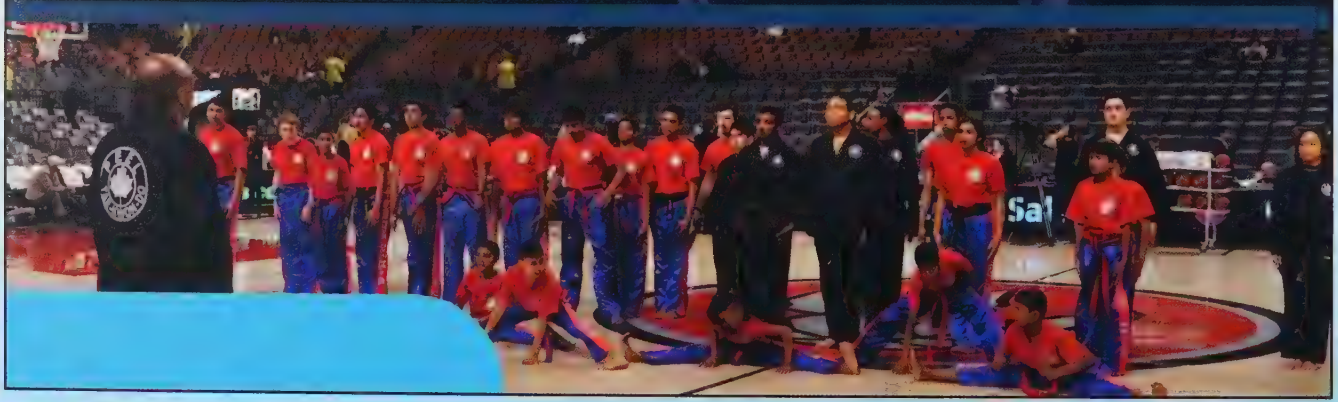

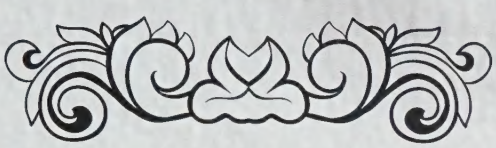

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